Why is self-care so important?

- Work based stress can cause:
  - **Decreased job performance**
    - The average Social Worker’s career expectancy is 8 years.
  - **Illness or injury to workers**
    - Social workers have illness rate 60% of average
  - **Workers leaving their jobs**
    - One in every five child protection jobs is unfilled

https://socialworktutor.com
What is the cost of helping?

- Helping professionals who intervene with the trauma and tragedy of others have been observed to show symptoms of:
  - Post-traumatic or secondary traumatic stress

*A HEART THAT ALWAYS UNDERSTANDS ALSO GETS TIRED.*
Lack of self care leads to...

- Secondary traumatic stress
- Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout

"Self-care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." - Eleanor Brownn
Secondary traumatic stress

- A term that is frequently used interchangeably with compassion fatigue. Its impact on practitioners includes pervasive feelings of hopelessness and depersonalization, increase in anxiety and sleep difficulties. (Stamm, 2008)
What are the signs of secondary traumatic stress?

- Sleeplessness
- Hypervigilence
- Avoidance behaviors
- Guilt
- Social Withdrawal
- Minimizing
- Anger and Cynicism
- Insensitivity to Violence
- Fear
- Poor Boundaries
- Inability to listen

- It may lead to Compassion Fatigue Syndrome

"It's probably not a question of if you will experience compassion fatigue or secondary trauma stress, it’s a matter of when."

- Anita Brooks

Compassion fatigue

- A caregiver’s **diminished capacity to have empathy** for his or her client

- A distressed experience of a care provider caused by exposure to the symptoms and accounts of trauma presented by clientele. Symptoms mimic those presented in PTSD, including **sleeplessness, hypervigilence, and avoidance behaviors** (Figley, 2015)
Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- Excessive blaming
- Bottled up emotions
- Isolation from others
- Receives unusual amount of complaints from others
- Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions
- Substance abuse used to mask feelings
- Compulsive behaviors, i.e. overspending, overeating, gambling
- Poor self-care i.e. hygiene, appearance
- Nightmares and flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating

Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, 2017
Burnout

- A state of emotional exhaustion accompanied by a reduced sense of personal accomplishment and a sense of depersonalization (Maslach & Jackson, 2014)
# Symptoms of Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs of Physical and Emotional Exhaustion</th>
<th>Signs of Cynicism and Detachment</th>
<th>Signs of Ineffectiveness and Lack of Accomplishment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic fatigue</td>
<td>Loss of enjoyment</td>
<td>Feelings of apathy and hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Pessimism</td>
<td>Increased irritability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgetfulness/ impaired concentration and attention</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Lack of productivity and poor performance</td>
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<td>Increased illness</td>
<td>Detachment</td>
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<td>Loss of appetite</td>
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<td>Anxiety</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SELF-CARE!
A combination of: General and Specific Techniques focused on Short and Long term Use

"An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly."
-Unknown

You cannot drink from an empty cup.
FILL YOURSELVES UP. YOU'RE WORTH IT.
What is self care?

- A varied group of self-selected actions taken by practitioners (or individuals in the helping field) to cope with work-based stress (Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996)

It is not selfish to love yourself, take care of yourself, and to make your happiness a priority. It is a necessity.
Areas of Self Care

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Workplace/practical
Physical

- Regular sleep
- Eat on a regular schedule/eat healthy
- Practice breathing
- Exercise

Physical Self-Care

1. Drink a glass of water with lemon
2. Get up and stretch
3. Take a nap
4. Take a walk around the block
5. Try a green smoothie
6. Give yourself a foot massage
7. Play your favorite song and dance
8. Eat a delicious ripe fruit
9. Take three deep breaths
10. Find a reason to laugh
Psychological

- Learn something new and interesting
- Play a game
- Watch a favorite movie or TV show

Mental Self-Care

1. Play a quick game online
2. Explore a new language with Duolingo
3. Take a screen break for an hour
4. Read an interesting article
5. Spend time in silence
6. Try eating breakfast mindfully
7. Keep a Google doc of all your ideas
8. Delete old emails you no longer need
9. Enroll in a local class
10. Cross something off your to-do list
Emotional

- Write in a journal
- Laugh
- Spend quality time with loved ones
- Acknowledge your emotions

“"My therapist told me the way to achieve true inner peace is to finish what I start. So far today, I have finished two bags of M&M's and a chocolate cake. I feel better already.""

~ Dave Barry

Emotional Self-Care

1. Pack a sweet note in your lunch
2. Say “I love you” in the mirror
3. Try morning pages
4. Call a friend
5. Let yourself feel fully for 90 seconds
6. Ask for positive feedback
7. Write in a journal
8. Create art to express emotion
9. Spend time with a pet
10. Help someone in need
Spiritual

- Attend religious service
- Pray
- Read spiritual literature
- Listen to worship music

Spiritual Self-Care

1. Meditate for 10 minutes
2. Pray
3. Read inspirational work
4. Volunteer in your community
5. Take a walk in the park
6. Eat lunch outside on the grass
7. Try a guided imagery
8. Do a random act of kindness
9. Try chanting
10. Mindfully observe a flower
Workplace/Practical

- Take a lunch break
- Vent to coworkers
- Try to improve workplace environment
- Keep a stress relief at your desk (i.e. a stress ball)
Basic themes of successful self-care

Exercise
Eating on regular schedule
Laughing
Spiritual practices
Letting myself cry
Quiet/ alone time